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FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7322
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1726
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1284
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2130
RHHJJPI/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHMCSSU/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 003350

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DS/T/ATA, S/CT
NSC FOR EPHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/07/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINS](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: SULAWESI -- SMALL EXPLOSION MARKS LOCAL FESTIVAL

REF: A. JAKARTA 3214

¶B. SURABAYA 85

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b-d).

¶1. (U) This message was coordinated with Consulate General Surabaya.

¶2. (C) SUMMARY: A small explosion occurred in Poso, Central Sulawesi, on December 5. There are no reports of casualties or serious damage and a local festival continues. The Provincial Police Chief stated to poloff that the explosion may have been a bomb. Although the incident was apparently isolated, there are reasons to be wary given past terrorist-related incidents in Poso. END SUMMARY.

¶3. (U) AN EXPLOSION: A small device exploded in the Central Sulawesi town of Poso on December 5 at approximately 2000 hrs. Witnesses claim that two men on a motorcycle threw a bag on the street near a restaurant and drove off before the bag exploded. No one was injured and there was no serious damage.

¶4. (C) POLICE RESPONSE: According to the Central Sulawesi Provincial Police Chief, Brigadier General Badrodin Haiti, the device was not powerful and was unsophisticated -- "something a teenager could make." Continuing, Haiti said he believed the device was a crude attempt to scare local residents from attending the recently re-established Poso Lake Festival, December 6-10. Haiti told poloff he believes the device was created by an "outsider" who may live in a neighboring regency (area). He stated the police have some suspects, but he would not elaborate. Haiti also said no additional police or military forces were being deployed to the city and that he thought the explosion was a one-time event. (Note: There are reports of a separate explosion in a town about 320 kilometers from Poso. There are no reports of casualties or damage from that incident, and no apparent link to the Poso explosion.)

¶5. (C) Both Christian and Muslim leaders from Poso and the town of Tentena believe the device was nothing more than fireworks used to celebrate the Christmas season. People in both towns are reportedly carrying on as normal and the festival is continuing.

¶6. (C) POSO PROGNOSIS: Poso has been moving quickly toward normality after several years of terrorist-related attacks and inter-religious violence. The Poso Lake Festival was resurrected this year to show that the violence and mistrust of the past is over and that communities are working together to reconcile (ref B). Given Poso's past, there are reasons to be wary, although there is no evidence that a return to violence is in the cards.

HUME